THE Voice of a CRY AT MIDNIGHT: OR, An ALARME TO Churches & Professors Speedily to Revive their Temple-Worke, OR Open-Worship, Before the present PROHIBITION be Reversed.

Printed in the Year, 1664.

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Some few Conſiderations tending to make it out, That Goſpel-Churches and Profeſſors are bound to keep up their Lords-Day-Worſhip in ſome Conſtant, Known and Open Place, *unleſs there be ſome Other and Better Reaſon to the contrary, than Man's bare Threatning Prohibition.*

CONSIDERATION I.

This was the conſtant Practice of Old, in a like Caſe: Nor have we any Approved Inſtance of another nature.

When *Daniel* was prohibited (but for the ſpace of Thirty Days) from Known private Prayer towards the Temple, (or place of Publick Church-Worſhip) he ſtill kept up his former Practice, *Dan.*6.10. unto the hazarding of his Life, *v.*16. notwithſtanding the certainty of his future Liberty, in caſe he would have but kept himſelf private for this little time, ſuch was the Kings Favour to him, *verſ.* 3, 16, 18, 19, 23, 26. Which Adventure of his, was ſignally approved by the Lord, in his miraculous Deliverance; and the Reaſon of which, is not reſolved into any extraordinary Inſtinct or Influence that *Daniel* had thus to do, but meerly becauſe he had *done no hurt before the King, and Innocency was found in him before the Lord, whom he had ſerved*, v. 20, 22. Now if *Daniel* did warrantably think himſelf bound (without any extraordinary Call) to run the apparent hazard of his Life, rather than he would ſeek to hide that Private Duty, (which only was a Memorial of Publick Worſhip, by praying with his Window open towards the Temple, 1 *King.*8. 48.) and all this in the Land of his Captivity; then much more are the Churches of Chriſt bonud to run the hazard of Impriſonment, rather than to carry their Publick Worſhip it ſelf from an Uſual Known Place, into a Corner, becauſe of Mans Prohibition; eſpecially ſince their Babyloniſh Captivity doth now ſeem to be returned, notwithſtanding the preſent ſtop that is put unto Goſpel-Temple-Work, anſwerable to what was of old in a Typical way? *Ezra* 4. 24.

This was drawn up before the late Act for Baniſhment came forth.

So alſo we read, That though Chriſt did withdraw from danger, when he had no Duty putting him upon that Adventure; yet did he not wave any part of that Publick Church-Worſhip which was incumbent upon

him as a Member of the Jewiſh Church, notwithſtanding the immenency of his hazard and death at laſt, by that means; and had he ever neglected to obſerve any of thoſe enjoyned Feaſts (as ſome do ungroundedly conceive) his Enemies would ſurely have objected it, when challenged by him to convince him of any ſin, *Joh.*8.46. eſpecially when they were ſo hard put to it to produce the leaſt colour of Evidence againſt him, *Matth.*26.59, 60. nay and themſelves alſo do ſeem to intimate that they did conclude he would come up at ſuch a time, *Joh.*11.56. Now if Chriſt himſelf (as he was a Member of that Jewiſh Church) did rather chuſe to be betrayed unto death, than not to attend upon the Publick Worſhip then required; much more ought Goſpel-Churches and their Officers, to keep up their Worſhip of the like nature, notwithſtanding the danger of Impriſonment, as they would approve themſelves to be Chriſt's Diſciples, by *taking up their Croſs* & coming after him, *Mat.*16.24. And whereas ſome ſay, That Chriſt knew when his hour was come; that altereth not the caſe at all, in relation to his Diſciples, who therefore ſhould conclude that the preſent hour is theirs, and ſhould act accordingly as in other caſes.

Si Domini ſententiâ pronunciatum eſt, eos in futurum ſeculum animam ſuam perdere, qui in hoc ſalvam habere velint; quanto id in gloriam cadit aptius cujus longe ſit facilior quam vitæ jactura? Calv. *Epiſt.* 1. *ad N. S.*

So alſo the Apoſtles, ſo ſoon as Chriſt had fully given forth his Commands pertaining to the Kingdom of God, *Act* 1.2,3. they were continually in the Temple, *Luk.*24,53. where they ſpent the Lords-day both in the forenoon, *Act.*2.15. and afternoon, *Act.*3.1. and though they were apprehended the ſame day, *Act.*4.3. and prohibited for the future, *verſ.*18. yet did they reſolve to perſiſt, *ver.*19,20. and ſpake the Word of God with boldneſs, *verſ.*31. (which could not be, had they withdrawn into a corner) and kept in the ſame place ſtill, *Act.*5.12. from whence being put into the common Priſon, *verſ.*18. they were miraculouſly delivered thence, *verſ.*19. and were bid by the Lord himſelf to go and preach in the ſame place again, *verſ.*20. which was not ſo much to warrant their future Boldneſs, as to ſignifie the Lords Approbation of what they had done before any ſuch extraordinary Miſſion: who thereupon being prohibited afreſh, *verſ.*28. did anſwer more reſolutely than before, *verſ.*29. and though they were beaten, *verſ.*40. yet did they not ceaſe to preach dayly in the Temple afterwards, *verſ.*42. nor did they pretend unto any extraordinary Influence for what they did, but onely becauſe they

De Apoſtolis quoq; quam honorifice ſentiunt cum ajunt confundi omnia & Eccleſiam deſtrui ſi quis eorum conſidentiam ſequatur? Calv. ad Pſeudonicodemos.

they were Christs Witnesses, *vers.* 32. who could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard, *Act.* 4.20. and who therefore ought to obey God rather than Men, *Act.* 5.29. Now if the Apostles (who fully knew Christs mind) would not be driven by Words or Blows from their wonted Known Place of Meeting; then ordinary and fixed Officers are much more bound to follow their Examples, notwithstanding Mans threatning Prohibition.

From all which Instances, I thus conclude: That if (with respect unto Mans Command) we shall either neglect or seek to hide our Religious Worship, we shall thereby condemn the Just, which is an abomination to the Lord, *Prov.* 17.15.

Now if any shall object, *That* Daniel *was absolutely forbidden to pray unto the true God, whose compliance in that case would have made a God of* Darius: *And that the Apostles were forbidden to preach at all in the Name of Jesus, of which nature the present Prohibition is not.*

To that I answer: As unto *Daniel's* Case, 1. It is evident that the Adversaries Design then, was the same with what is now, *viz.* To pick a Quarrel, *Dan.* 6.4,5. 2dly, *Daniel* was onely then tempted to hide his more private Prayer, in which Case, it is to be feared that his Practice would scarce be imitated at this day by those whom a far less danger doth deter from confessed Publick Worship, although the present Prohibition were professedly as gross and high as then it was. 3dly, Such as comply with the present Probibition should consider whether they do not thereby make a God of that Man who doth thus interpose: To which I may adde, That *Daniel's* Prohibition was but for Thirty Days, whereas ours at this day is endless, and therefore our case is more urgent now, than his was then.

And as to the Apostles Case, The Adversarie did onely intend to hinder Christs being preached then, so far as that Doctrine did interfere with their corrupt Interest, and so the present Prohibition is every whit as full as theirs then was: To which I may add, That our Case is something worse, because the Apostles were not then forbidden to preach up other Truths in the Temple, or elsewhere, as we are absolutely at this day, though we should wholly forbear to preach down their Ceremonies, and to charge them as those Apostles did, *Act.* 5.28. so that we are more universally forbidden to speak in Christs Name at all, than they were.

CONSID. II.

We shall else sin against the express Command of Christ, who biddeth his Disciples that their Light should shine before Men, *Mat.* 5.16. *Which it cannot do, if put under a Bushel,* ver. 15. *or in a secret place,* Luk. 11.33.

Now it cannot be denied, but that Christ doth there primarily intend

repd, such kind of Duty, as did more peculiarly relate to his Apostles, viz. Preaching and Praying, with reference whereunto, he elsewhere biddeth, that they should *speak in Light*, and *preach upon the House-tops*, and not *fear Men*, *For their is nothing Hid that shall not be Known*, Mat. 10. 26, 27. or as it is in another parrallel place, *Neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad*; and therefore they were as a Candle which should not be put under a Bushel or Bed, *Mark* 4. 21, 22. From the comparing of which places together, it is apparent that Christ here doth not only intend the Light of Life (as some would have it) but principally the Light of Preaching, or of Religious Exercises, which he would have not to be carried into a Corner for fear of Men, but to be set openly upon a Candlestick, that so it might give Light to all comers, and in a way sutable unto his own constant practice, *Joh.* 18. 20. And that this was the meaning of Christ's Command, is further evidenced by the Apostles practices before mentioned, whose Preaching is elsewhere resembled by that of plowing and feeding Cattel, which are imployments that do relate unto the open Field, *Luke* 17. 7. and which no Sober man will offer to say, was solely incumbent upon those extraordinary Officers. Now if some men be thus bound to Preach, then others also must necessarily be bound to Hear; and more especially such who pretend to be the Flock or Husbandry of those Labourers; which fully proveth what is contended for.

Quos verbi sui Ministerio Dominus destinat, iis veluti publicam personam imponit, ut eorum vox in luce versetur & super certa. Calv. *Ep.* 1. *ad* N. S.

CONSID. III.

We shall else come short of that Main End, for which we are appointed.

Visible Churches are shadowed out by Candlesticks, *Rev.* 1. 20. and the use of a Candlestick, is put directly in opposition unto a place of privacy, *Luke* 11. 33. So that those Churches answer not unto the proper name of Candlesticks, whose Light or Worship is withdrawn into a secret place; and the Unchurching of a Society is signified by the Removing of a Candlestick out of its place, *Rev.* 2. 5. which is enough to make those Churches tremble, who are thus active unto their own Self-ruining Removal. A true visible Church is called *the Pillar of Truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. alluding (as is generally conceived) to the antient use of Pillars, upon which Proclamations were wont to be fixed and held forth to publick view; and in which respect, those Publick Preachers are called Pillars, *Gal.* 2. 9. so that they cease to be Proper Pillars who do not publickly hold forth what Truths they are for that end betrusted with, and therefore (perhaps) might *Paul* term *Peter* a *seeming Pillar* only, *Gal.* 2. 9. because he could privately be in the practice of

of that Christian Liberty, which he durst not own, when in the presence of a contrary-minded Potent Interest, *ver.* 12. Now if the main Pillar be taken away, the Church cannot be likely to continue long after. And indeed, what else doth a Church serve for, or wherein doth a Society differ from a single Professor, if not in the Publickness of their Testimony, on the behalf of Christ's Name and Truths and Institutions? *Solomons* Temple was dedicated to the Name of God, for Solemn Publick Worship, 2 *Chron.* 2. 4. and it was built upon an Hill, which therefore could not be hid, 2 *Chron.* 3. 1. Now that Temple is said to have been a clear Type of Gospel-Churches, 1 *Cor.* 3. 17. who are a People for the Name of God, *Acts* 15. 14. among whom Christ's Truths are publickly to be taught, *Act.* 20. 20. and who are compared by Christ unto a building upon an Hill, which cannot be hid, *Mat.* 5. 14. A Building indeed upon an Hill may possibly be hid in case it be pluckt down, but not whilst standing: which they should do well to weigh, who think not themselves bound to be at all times visible, and yet would retain the insignificant name of *Churches*, or *Gospel-Temples* still. It will be well, if some have not *Hid* themselves at *this Day*, where they will scarcely be ever found *hereafter*. And this very Consideration hath often made mine heart ake, in relation to those Present Churches, who have through Fear withheld their wonted Visibility; which I have sadly thought may prove a very *dangerous* if not a *deadly* wound. The seventh Trumpet will shew us the Gospel-second-Temple (or Visible Church-state) opened, *Rev.* 11. 15, 16. but that Trumpet will also sound unto a kind of General Renovation, resembling that of the following *New Jerusalem*, *Rev.* 21. 5. and I am waiting to see, how this Design of Christ will be advanced, by the disappearing of our present Heavens as well as Earth, in order unto a more Glorious Restitution of them both. In the mean while, let it soberly be enquired into, Whether that Dating of the Second Temple's Foundation, from the Day in which the *Jews* did cordially Return unto that Work, *Hag.* 2. 18. (which Foundation had yet been laid long before, *Ezra* 3. 10.) Whether this doth not typically hint unto us, that together with God's Peoples Returning to their Prohibited Publick Worship in these latter dayes, Gospel-Temples will then be New-founded; having virtually destroyed their former Foundation, by their Complyance with Man's intervening Prohibition. And though that *Jewish Church-state* of old, was preserved notwithstanding such a failure, because there was then but One Individual Church in the whole world, whose Constitution did dispense with greater corruptions, and whose Being was Necessarily to be continued, until its final Dissolution by the Death of Christ: yet are there not the like Reasons now, in relation to Gospel-Churches,

which

which are both More in number, and of a Purer make; ſo that the Generality of theſe Churches may be Deſtroyed, and Others may ſucceed them, without the leaſt infringement of any former Word or Purpoſe. The Righteouſneſs of which Diſpenſation, (if ever it ſhould occur) will be reſolved into this, Becauſe ſuch Churches have laid themſelvs waſte, by coming ſhort of that Main End, for which they were appointed. And though I will not peremptorily predetermine ſo ſad a Controverſie; yet may this Warning be of uſe, to *rouſe up* our *ſleepy Churches*, unto a *timely* attending upon their *proper Work*, before it be too late to ſet about it.

CONSID. IV.

If we at this day ſhall withdraw our pretended Publick Worſhip into a more Private Place, becauſe of Man's Prohibition; we ſhall thereby incur what did befall thoſe Faint-hearted Jews *before mentioned.*

Who being prohibited by the *Perſian* Emperour to go on with their *Temple-Work*, Ezra 4. 21. did thereupon ſurceaſe, *ver.* 24. and ran every man unto his own Houſe, *Hag.* 1. 9. ſolaceing themſelves in their perſonal accommodations, which were by this means continued, *verſe* 4, and pretending unto ſuch as were diſſatisfied with this Act of theirs, that the Time of Building the Lord's Houſe was not yet come, *verſe* 2. becauſe they were bid by their Superiours to forbear, until a freſh command from them ſhould be given forth, *Ezra* 4. 21. and ſo that Work ceaſed, unto the ſecond year of the Reign of *Darius* King of *Perſia*, *verſe* 24. In which ſecond year of *Darius*, *Haggai* and *Zechariah* were ſtirred up to Propheſie unto them in a rowzing manner, *Ezra* 5. 1. *Haggai* began in the ſixth month, *Hag.* 1. 1. and *Zechariah* was two months after, *Zech.* 1. 1. both which continued thus to do, until the 24th day of the ninth month, before their Word took any conſiderable place upon the People, *Hag.* 2. 18. although they did ſeem to be a little ſtirred in their ſpirits three months before, *Hag.* 1. 14, 15. or three weeks after that *Haggai* had begun to Propheſie, *verſe* 1. But it ſhould ſeem that their hearts did ſoon to fail them a ſecond time, notwithſtanding that more than ordinary freſh Encouragement in the month following, *Hag.* 2. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. (ſo dangerous a thing it is, to have Once been of a complying Spirit,) ſo that *Zechariah* was fain to come in with his help in the next or eighth month, *Zech.* 1. 1. and yet the buſineſs was not Effectually accompliſhed, till *Haggai* came again, in the ninth month, *Hag.* 2. 10. whoſe diſcourſe then was of ſuch a nature, as that they forthwith fell unto their Work upon that ſelf-ſame day, *ver.* 18. in which his laſt ſpeaking to them did begin, *ver.* 10. and the Foundation of their Temple, is ſaid to take its firſt Date, from this laſt time of their returning to it, *ver.* 18. as if all their former labour had been of no effect.

Which work upon that Peoples hearts was chiefly brought about, by the Lord's stirring up their spirits thereunto, *Hag.* 1. 14. But the Means by which this was effected, were these that follow.

First, God did expresly command them, to go up (out of their ceiled houses) to the Mountain, and bring wood and build the house, *Hag.* 1. 8. which words are said to be, the words of *Haggai* the Prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, who was the Lord's Messenger, in the Lord's Message unto the People, *ver.* 12, 13. to signifie the clearness of a Peoples Call from God, unto a work of this nature, whatever Darkness some may pretend unto; which seemeth to be the cause of this Multiplied Divine Avouchment.

A second sort of Means here used, was, a very great measure of Encouragement from the Lord; who promised that if they would build his House, he then would *take pleasure in it*, and *be glorified*, *Hag.* 1. 8. to signifie unto them the Acceptableness of such an undertaking. And when their spirits began to be a little stirred hereupon, *Hag.* 1. 14. he fortified them against the Despicableness of that beginning, *Hag.* 2. 3. giving them further to understand, that this Latter House should be more filled with Peace and Glory than the former, ver. 9. and that the next shaking of the Heavens and Earth and Sea, ver. 6, should usher in Christ's Personal Appearing, ver. 7. And lest they should be Discouraged with present Difficulties and seeming Improbabilities, he biddeth them to *Be strong, for God was with them*, Hag. 2. 4. *and his Spirit remained among them according to his ancient Covenant*, who therefore should not need to fear, v. 5. assuring them, *that He would be as a Wall of Fire round about them*, *Zech.* 2. 5. and that the seven Eyes of his Protecting Providence should be upon that *Foundation-Stone* which he had laid, *Zech.* 3. 9. and that the greatest *Mountain should become a Plain before Zerubbabel*, who should *Finish what he had Begun*, unto their Rejoycing, who sometimes had not Faith to Believe it, *Zech.* 4. 6, 7, 9, 10.

But then the Third and last sort of Motives (which is the thing I drive at chiefly) were of a sharper nature, and are as followeth.

1. *Haggai* tells them, that the Lord of Hosts took notice of what they said, when they pleaded, *that the time was not yet come*, Hag. 1. 2. which one would think should make such wary in what they speak, since God (and as the Lord of Hosts) doth declare himself to be an Hearer.

2. He doth forbear to own them as his People and Servants, or such as did Fear before him, and in whom his Spirit did remain, (so long as the Work of his House was thus unworthily Neglected by them,) and onely styleth them, *This People*, Hag. 1. 2. and, *O ye*, ver. 4. to signifie, that the Visibility of their Saintship was hereby Clouded in a

manner wholly. Nor was *Zerubbabel* himself acknowledged by the Lord to be so much as his servant, *Hag.* 2. 23. until he had first returned to this Work with all his heart, *v.* 18, 20. Nor are the People said to have had the Fear of God, until they did obey his Voice in that respect, before the Prohibition was reversed, *Hag.* 1. 12. at which time also (and not before) the Spirit of God is said to be amongst them, *Hag.* 2. 5.

3. He bids them to *consider their wayes*, *Hag.* 1. 5. which had been signally witnessed against, by the Disappointment of their expectations, both in their Labours and enjoyments, being blown upon by the Lord, because of his House that lay waste, *ver.* 6, 9, 10. notwithstanding all which providential Rebukes, they yet returned not, *Hag.* 2. 16, 17.

4. *Zechariah* tells them, that the Lord had been sore displeased with their fathers, because of their refusing to return unto him, *Zech.* 1. 2, 3. whom he would wish them not to resemble, *v.* 4. considering what had befain their fathers, according to that Word which sometimes they had despised, *v.* 6. to signifie, that their present wayes were evil; and that their persisting therein, was the high-way to that *Babylon*, from whence they had but newly been delivered.

5. When all this availed not, then *Haggai* comes again in the next month, and tells them plainly, that *every work of their hands was unclean*, *Hag.* 2. 14. so long as they did touch or comport with that *Persian Prohibition*, which was unto them as a dead body that did pollute, ver. 13. because it was not enlivened by any Order from the Lord, but was directly contrary thereunto.

And this last Motive did go so near their hearts, as that upon the very same day in which these words were uttered, *Hag.* 2. 10. they all returned to their work, *ver.* 18. and never did desert it more (that we read of) until they had fully finished it; being marvellously prevented with an encouraging Proclamation from *Darius*, Ezra 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. wherein he doth not only threaten their Disturbers with the loss of their Estate and Life, *v.* 11, but doth also most deeply curse all Kings and People, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this House of God, *v.* 12.

Now to apply all this unto my present purpose, *Solomons* Temple was an unquestionable type of Gospel-Saints and Churches, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. 2 *Thess.* 2. 4. *Ephes.* 2. 21. *Rev.* 3. 12. and so that second Temple in *Zerubbabel's* time, must needs most fully answer, unto that Restauration of Saints and Churches in Gospel-times, which doth accompany the Return of their Captivity out of *Mystical Babylon*; during the time of whose continuance there, this Gospel-Church-state is shut up, together with that Inner Court which was a Type of true visible Sainthip, *Rev.* 11. 1, 2, 19. And consequently that Temple-work of old,

bld, must necessarily shadow out (at leastwise with reference unto visible Churches) such a kind of Religious Worship (truly of Christ's appointing) as was anciently wont to be performed in that material Temple, viz. Solemn and Publick, in some *known, setled place* or other, as hath been formerly declared and proved. A general Liberty whereunto hath been of later years proclaimed, although but very few Professors in comparison did then improve it, just as it was of old, *Ezra* 1. 1, 2, 3, 5. But because the true *Jews* durst not accommodate with some *Samaritans* (who had been Old Incumbents) in managing that work, *Ezr.* 4. 2, 3. they therefore met with an early trouble in their Building, *v.* 4. through the help of Mercinary Counsellors, *v.* 5. and Salary-men, *v.* 14. who signified to the *Persian* King, that the City-walls were set up, *v.* 12, and that if this work were not obstructed, it would end in Rebellion and Sedition, for which cause (say they) was this City at the first destroyed, *v.* 15. although the Lord had said, that it was because of their Idolatrous Abominations, 2*Chron.* 36. 14, 15, 16, 17. But the others Plea it seems was registred in the *Persian* Chronicles, *Ezra* 4. 19, 20. which did occasion a Command to cause these men to cease, *v.* 21. wherewith they did comply, *v.* 24.

This is our case at present; onely that Prohibition then, was put in execution (from the first) by Force and Power, *Ezra* 4. 23. which in these our dayes hath been Submited unto upon more easy terms; nor was that Prohibition Absolute (as now it is) but onely until another command should be given forth, *v.* 21. the former of which differences doth Aggravate our present Compliers Sin, *Hos.* 5. 11. as the latter doth serve to stirup their Zeal unto that duty, which now is forbidden without the least signifying hopes of any future alteration.

But since our present case is so fully parallel with theirs of old, and doth seem to have been thereby typified; let not us in these dayes, Say, or Do as they then did, lest their sad Portion be also entailed upon us together with their Sin; since these things happened unto them for Ensamples, and are written for our Admonition, 1 *Cor.* 10, 11. In order whereunto, let their forenamed Motives be duely weighed by us.

1. In a time of publick Temptation the Lord *Heareth* and *Heareth*, both what they say who Fear him and think upon his Name, *Mal.* 3. 16. and also what others say and do in relation to their former failings, *Jer.* 8. 6. *Senacherib's* rage came up into God's ears, *Isa.* 37. 29. and he heard the blasphemies of *Edom* against the Mountains of *Israel*, *Ezek.* 35. 12. who also Heareth what some now speak, when they say, *The time is not yet come, the time that His House should be built.* He taketh notice, who these are, that can content themselves in their own ceiled

houses, whilst the *Ark* of God dwelleth within Private Curtains; and he knoweth that such are not of *David's* Spirit, 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. *Psal.* 132. 3, 4, 5. And he will be (in these last dayes especially) a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, *Mal.* 3. (or men furnished with *Babylonish* wisdom, *Dan.* 2. 2, 12.) and against the Adulterers, (or such as have *treacherously departed* from him, *Jer.* 3. 20.) and against False Swearers, *Mal.* 3. 5. or such as have Covenanted to be a People for his Name, and after Vows have made enquiry: but God is not *Mocked.*

2. And let not such wonder, if they be only called, *This People*, or *Ot*, what ever glorious Profession they may pretend unto, Affection or Disaffection to principal Time-Truths and Duties, (which may be known by Christ's most legible Marks upon them, *Gal.* 5. 11. and 6. 17) hath alwayes been (and still is) predominantly Characteristical, as to the Spiritual state of visible Professors; and Open Gospel-Worship at this day is undeniably in the front of those things, that are now shot at.

Suos ad confessionem vocat Dominus, quam qui detrectant, alium sibi Magistrum quærant oportet, quando ab eo servi sub dissimulatione non possunt. (Calv. *Ep.* 1. *ad* N. S.

And as to this particular case, how do those seem to be the People of the Lord, who do not own him as their Only Lord, *Isa.* 26. 13? Or how do they seem to be his Servants, who do not yeeld obedience to his Commands, for fear of Men, *Mat.* 8. 9? Or how do they seem to have his Spirit in them, which is a Spirit of Power, and not of slavish fear, 2 *Tim.* 1, 7? Or how do they seem to *fear* him, who do not *think upon his Name*, Mal. 3. 16? I do grant that some of God's Real Servants, (such as *Zerubbabel* was afterwards owned to be, *Hag.* 2. 23.) may possibly come under the power of such a like miscarriage; but yet the visibility of their Saintship (until they do return) must needs be very much eclipsed, whose Light doth not shine before Men, but is sinfully carried by them into a Secret place; which therefore no man (truly wise) will ever do, *Luke* 11. 33.

3. And let the men of this Generation consider their Wayes, and see how suitably to what was of old, the Lord hath of later years rebuked the like Remissness, and that both in the Letter and Mystery.

Since the time that the City and Temple-work hath been deceitfully attended unto, or laid aside, hath there not been a general complaint of the want of outward Peace and Trade or Hire, as it was of old, *Zech.* 8. 10? Hath not the Lord witnessed against us, by unusual Tempests and unseasonable weather, as he smote them of old with Blasting, Mildew and Hail, *Hag.* 2. 17? Hath not the Earth been stayed from her fruit, as *Hag.* 1. 10, and men been disappointed of their great Expectations, as *Hag.* 1. 9. and 2. 16? So also in a mystical sense; Many have sown

sown (or preached) much, who yet have brought in little. They have spiritually eaten and drunk, but yet have not been filled or comfortably satisfied. They have been cloathed with the garment of Profession, but few have seemed to be truly warm. And he that hath appeared to earn some wages by his former good service in the Cause of God, hath put it into a bag with holes, or lost all presently, as *Hag.* 1.6. The Heaven of Church-state or Christian profession hath been stayed from its wonted fructifying Dew: and the Earth of lower civil constitution hath also been stayed from its ordinary fruit of Peace and Righteousness, as *Hag.* 1.10. In all which respects, most men have looked for much, upon some long-look'd-for Revolution, but lo it came to little; and when they brought it home, God blew upon it, as *Hag.* 1.9. so that it was not half so much as they expected, as *Hag.* 2.16. And why, saith the Lord of Hosts? *because of mine House that is waste, and ye run every man to his Own house, Hag.* 1.9.

4. Let us also consider, that God looketh upon this Surcease, to be no other than a Departure from him, whereupon he hath also Departed from us; as is evident from his bidding those Typical *Jews* to turn to him, and promising thereupon that he also would turn to them, *Zech.* 1.3. And though some are pleased to call this miscarriage by a finer name, yet doth the Lord of Hosts represent these as Evil wayes and doings, and of the same nature with theirs, which did occasion their being formerly carried captive into *Babylon*, *Zech.* 1.4. which this complyance doth expose unto, *v.* 6. and as is plainly to be seen at this day, since the Surcease of *Open Worship*, hath been the first stone at which men have stumbled, and fallen by degrees into more gross *Babylonish Pollutions*; which is but a bad improvement of our late deliverance thence, and of that known sore divine displeasure which our conforming forefathers did thereby labour under, as the Lord hinted to them of old, *Zech.* 1.2.

5. If all these former Motives will not take place upon us, then must we know from the Lord himself, that every work of our hands is unclean, so long as the Dead Body of *Man's Prohibition* is thus *touched*, by our sinful subjection thereunto. Indeed the *Jewish Magistrates* (as they were Types of Christ) had a *Divine Authority* for their Ordinary interposure in Religious matters; but so had not the *Persian Rulers*; much less to contradict what God himself had given order for: and therefore that Presumptuous Decree was a *dead Body*, which had no Spirit of Life from God abiding in it, and which upon that account should have been forthwith *buried* by these *Jews* out of their sight, as dead things use to be. Now, if every work of our hands be thus *unclean*, then we may preach, and hear, and pray, or partake of other Ordinances,

dinances, but cannot expect that God should accept us, or be well-pleased with us, for he is Holy. And therefore if any *Israelite* of old was thus polluted by *touching a dead Body*, he was to be *unclean seven dayes*, (to signify his being deeply humbled for it) and was not to be clean the seventh day neither, unless he did begin *betimes* to purifie himself (upon the third day) with the *water of Separation*, *Numb.* 19. 11, 12; during which time of his uncleanness, he was not to enter into the Tabernacle, *v.* 13. And in relation to their *Passover*, (which answereth to our *Lords Supper*, 1 Cor. 5. 8.) a person thus polluted might not partake thereof, *Numb.* 9. 6, 7. until a month after (*v.* 10, 11.) the usual appointed time, *v.* 1, 3; that so he might have a sufficient time wherein to purifie himself from that defilement. From whence it doth appear, that a Person's subjecting to Man's Prohibition, (or his *touching* that *dead Body*) doth expose him unto a being prohibited by the Lord from intermedling with any kind of Tabernacle (or Gospel-Temple) work, untit he shall have first been deeply humbled for that miscarriage; and till he shall have purified himself with utmost speed from that uncleanness, by a fresh application of that water of the red heifer, *Numb.* 19. 19. which was a Legal Type of Christ's Sanctifying Vertues, *Heb.* 9. 13, 14. And if any person thus polluted should adventure into the Tabernacle upon other terms, or carelesly neglect this *self-purifying Duty*; he thereby did defile the Tabernacle, and made his uncleanness to be of an abiding nature, and was to be *cut off from Israel*, Numb. 19. 13. And not only was the Person thus polluted to be unclean Himself, but also whatever touched him, whether it were a Thing, *Numb.* 19. 22, or Person, *v.* 21. to signifie, that such do lay a barr in the way of their comfortable communion with Others, as well as with the Lord himself. In which last respect, the Law of *Moses* doth typically forbid God's *Israel*, to eat of (or to be all one with, as a man is with what he eateth) such creatures as run into their Hiding-places upon every the least affrightment or discouragement, *Lev.* 11. 29, 30. Nor may it be much wondred at, if living Members do seem to have little Fellowship with those who do not hold a Conformity with Christ the Head, but differ as much from him as the Living do from the Dead, which is said to be the very case of those, who in matters of this nature are subject to Ordinances after the Commands and Doctrines (or Prohibitions) of Men, *Col.* 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. So that as we would consult for the Warrant of our comfortable converse with Christ's Appointments and with his People; Let us make haste to get our selves Evangelically cleansed from this particular defilement: the nature of which Gospel-Purification is aptly shadowed out unto us, by those ceremonial rites, which were commanded to be made use of,

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in the case before mentioned, *Numb.* 19. 18, 19. Nor is it without its due weight and worthiness to be observed, that when that Water of Separation was first appointed, the onely exemplification of its Purifying vertue then recorded, is this Instance of a person thus polluted by Touching a Dead body, *Numb.* 19. 9, 11. to signifie unto us, that in relation to this particular case (whenever it should occur) the Lord did more especially intend, that this Law should stand in force, and be accordingly put in execution. The Doctrinal part of which Truth was readily assented unto by the Priests in *Haggai*'s time, *Hag.* 2. 11, 13; and the Prophet's Application of it, was then effectually and speedily received by the People, *v.* 10, 18. which if it were the will of God, I could heartily wish might work accordingly in these our dayes; nor am I yet altogether hopeless, since that dispensation (in the general) doth seem to be so clearly typical. But though I cannot absolutely promise unto my self the like success upon such a sort of persons, yet am I comfortably perswaded that the Work of Christ will speedily be revived, by some or other, for his own Name-sake, *Ezek.* 36. 22; who *is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*, Mat. 3. 9, and who hath said that his *Name shall be great among the Gentiles*, Mal. 1. 11; which will be sad news to those antient Jewish Professors, who shall provoke him by their Obstinacy, to Turn away from them unto some others, and which the Lord grant may never prove the deserved portion of this Professing Generation.

CONSIDER V.

By our comporting with the present Prohibition, we do Betray our Civil Right, and in a Religious case; and not only so, but we do hereby also comply with that Law, which doth forbid our Meetings altogether, though in never so private a way. The least of which doth seem to be of sufficient weight unto the businesse in hand, and more especially the latter of them.

1. We shall betray our undoubted Civil Right if we shall be deterred from the lawful improvement of what is our Own, *viz.* our Proper Goods or Private Houses. Christ oft-times preached in a private house, so did the Apostles also, and the Gentile Churches in those dayes did frequently perform their publick worship upon the Lord's day in some such place; and therefore no Christian surely will dare to question the Lawfulness and Goodness of such a work as that is, in a man's own private house. Now is it not my native right, to do with mine own what I will, in an holy blameless way, *Mat.* 20. 15? And is it not a manifest wrong in any, to debar me of that Liberty, unless there be some better Reason than *Man's bare Will*? And what have men justly to object against it? They dare not say, that the Work is in its

own

own nature Evil; they do not prosecute against the Doctrine in self there preached: they cannot truly affirm, that such an Assembly is formidable unto the People, what-ever some do boldly speak. So that the generality of sober people (and especially the persons thus prohibited) are far from being satisfied, as to the just ground of such an Inhibition. Now he that hath but the spirit of a Man in him, (which Christianity doth not destroy but cherish) although he may not resist, yet will he suffer something, rather than he will actively resign his meer civil right in so clear a case. And though the Man of Sin doth make men of a slavish spirit, *Rev.* 18. 13. yet is it the revealed Will of God, that none of his *Levites* (or meanest Servants) should alienate, exchange or sell their Civil Rights or Temporal Allotments, *Ezek.* 48. 13, 14.

2. I shall hereby part with my Civil Right in a Religious case; from whence two great Inconveniences would ensue.

The one is, that I should thereby countenance Man's Interposure in a business of this nature; which had need be first better Proved than ever yet it hath been, before I may give Christ's *Davidical Key* out of his hand, and into theirs, who *shut* therewith instead of *opening*.

The other evil Consequent hereof (which is less obnoxious to common prejudice) is this; that if I shall submit unto the Prohibition of such a Meeting in any one setled place, I may aswell submit unto it with reference to Another, and so the Meeting will soon be wholly laid aside; Since Man cannot be denied to have as good a Right in one place as in another, within the compass of his Jurisdiction.

3. All will confess, that we ought not to forsake that Assembling of our selves together, which the Primitive Christians were commanded to keep up, *Heb.* 10. 25.

Nor can it be denied, but that those Christians (especially the *Gentiles*) did usually meet upon a Religious account in some convenient House and Room. Now the present Law doth Absolutely forbid all such kind of Assemblies, directly contrary to what was then practised, and in the pursuance of Christ's Command: So that my shifting from Place to Place because of the present Prohibition, will be a Visible compliance with that Law, which doth forbid all manner of *Religious* Meetings Absolutely, save what are in their Temples and of their own modelling; the manifest Drift whereof is, to keep up the reputation of their Service and the supposed Holiness of their Places, &c. Now would *Daniel* ever have complied in the least with such a Law, given forth for such an end and purpose? In a case of Religious Worship, *Exod.* 5. 1, 3. when *Moses* had an Offer of Liberty, upon condition that he would but leave his Flocks and Herds behind, *Exod.* 10. 24. he peremptorily resolved that he would not leave *an Hoof*, because they must have

have wherewith to Sacrifice, and knew not beforehand what God would be ſerved with, *v.* 25,26. Now let me beſeech ſome at this day calmly to conſider, Whether in their withdrawing from a wonted known *Open place*, they do not leave behind them their Publick Worſhip and proper Sacrifice? Or whether they be ſo fully ſatisfied, that the Publickneſs of their Worſhip is not that Male (left behind) which God would be chiefly ſerved with.

CONSID. VI.

We ſhall hereby evidence our being acted by a ſpirit of ſlaviſh fear in the things of God; which is a ſadder ſign than many are aware of.

That this proceedeth from the fear of Suffering, is that which the more Ingenuous do of themſelves confeſs, and is too evident to be denied. Now we are bid in Nothing to be terrified by our Adverſaries, *Phil.* 1. 28. and then, not ſo much as to change a Place upon that account; eſpecially ſince this very Act in particular, is ſo generally interpreted by all ſorts of perſons, as being the iſſue of a poor timerous ſpirit. In which reſpect, the truly Righteous are ſaid to be *bold as Lions*, *Prov.* 28. 1, *viz. in their God*, notwithſtanding their outward ſufferings, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 2. and a right Goſpel-Saint is deſcribed, by his *not having received the ſpirit of Fear, but of Power*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. nor are Women owned to be the Daughters of *Sarah*, ſave *as they do well, and are not afraid*, 1 Pet. 3. 6. and that Fear which maketh men to talk of a *Confederacy* with threatning *Aſſur*, is expreſly called *the Fear of Others*, and not the Fear of God's faithful Servants, *Iſa.* 8. 12. and they are numbred with *Treacherous men, who are not valiant for the Truth*, Jer. 9. 2, 3. and he is called a *Wicked Servant*, who being *afraid* did *hide that talent in a Napkin* or ſecret place, which ſhould have been put forth to Publick uſe, *Mat.* 25. 18, 25, 26, 27. So that as we tender, at leaſtwiſe the viſibility of our being Righteous ones, and Goſpel-Saints, and *Abraham's* Children, and Chriſt's approved faithful Servants; let us all tremble to think of being overcome by this ſpirit of Fear in the Cauſe of God. And though many other Truths are controverted and not ſo generally received; yet hath it been confeſſed by all, till now of late, that Church-Worſhip ſhould be publickly kept up, and that Preaching upon the Lord's day ſhould not be in a Private corner. Nor is there any one Perſecuted duty at this day more generally Juſtified by all ſorts of ſober & unbyaſſed people, than this of an *holy Boldneſs* in ſome, who ſtand their ground, and will not alter their wonted Place of Meeting. So that the whole World will witneſs (together with the Scriptures) that this is a good and Righteous Cauſe; which I am apt to think but few do queſtion the Warrant of their ſuffering for, if they had but Courage; and as appeareth, by their granting it to be a Liberty to ſuffer, though not a

Duty; which ſeems unto me to be a very ſtrange Paradox, and the product of an undetermined conteſt between Conſcience and Intereſt. The want of which Boldneſs, in a caſe of this nature, is ſadly aggravated, whilſt we conſider, how utterly unlike we are unto that Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, whoſe Off-ſpring we would be thought to be: how diſobedient we are to Chriſt's Order, who biddeth that we ſhould not be afraid of Death, *Mat.* 10. 28. and then much leſs of Impriſonment, *Rev.* 2. 10. how we do undervalue his Encouragements, who biddeth us, *Be ſtrong, for I am with you*, Hag. 2. 4. nay, and how adventurous we can be in other caſes, as fierce as Hawks in our own cauſe, whilſt we are as fearful as the Mouſe in the Cauſe of Jeſus Chriſt, both which ſorts of creatures were therefore typically alike unclean, *Lev.* 11. 16, 29.

At Natura repugnat, inquiunt; Quis negat? ſed ubi eſt virtus Domini, qua extare in nobis debuerat? Calv. *ad Pſeudonicodemos.*

CONSID. VII.

By our withdrawing into a Corner, we are very Prejudicial unto others; both in a way of giving offence, and of being ſpiritually uſeleſs, and of expoſing them to ſad temptations.

1. The hearts of many Sober People are hereby juſtly grieved, whilſt they obſerve how poor a ſpirit we are of.

When the *Primitive Chriſtians* continued daily in the Temple, they had Favour with all the People, *Act.* 2. 46, 47. which hath been the portion of bold Adventurers at this day alſo; as others Fearfulneſs in that reſpect hath cauſed great Offence. Do not many now ſay, *Is this the Faith that ſome have pretended unto? Is this their Fear and Confidence? who in a time of Peace could cry up Suffering-duty, but now it is come upon themſelves and they faint, it toucheth them and they are troubled.* Sion was a type of Goſpel Saints, *Heb.* 12. 22. and ſhe is deſcribed by her being furniſhed with Players upon Inſtruments as well as Singers, *Pſal.* 87. 7. and may not ſome then juſtly doubt, whether ſuch be of that number, between whoſe Handy-work and Tongues (or Actions and Diſcourſes) there is ſo great a diſcord? Now rather than *Paul* would offend or grieve his brother, he would part with his liberty of eating meat, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. yea though he thereby alſo hazarded his outward liberty; for the ſecuring whereof, ſome then were free to comply a little, which *Paul* did abſolute declare againſt, 1 *Cor.* 10. 28.

2. We are alſo thus Prejudicial to others, by ceaſing to be Spiritually uſeful to them, contrary to what is our bounden duty.

Chriſt hath ſet up the Light of Goſpel-Worſhip in his Candleſticks, that ſo they which come in may ſee the Light, *Mat.* 5. 15. *Luke* 11. 33.

33. and the Assemblies of his People should be so ordered, as that the whole Church might come together (and not in parts) into one place, where such may also come who do not believe, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23, 24. and all God's Springs are said to be in his typical *Sion* before mentioned, *Psal.* 87. 7. now Spring-water doth use to serve in Common, (as those waters from under the Sanctuary do, *Ezek.* 47. 8.) whose natural course will not be long Obstructed by any Humane stop or Prohibition; and therefore it is onely meant with reference unto God's Protection from more gross pollutions, when the Spouse is compared to a Spring shut up, or a Fountain sealed, *Cant.* 4. 12. But is there not a general outcry at this day by many poor dark and thirsty souls, that they would gladly partake of our Light and Water, but either they know not where to find us, or else our doors are lockt against them, or at leastwise they are wearied and discouraged with daily enquiries, where our unsetled Meetings are? Is this the way to gain that blessing, *Psal.* 41. 1? or is it not the ready way to have many a Curse, *Prov.* 28. 27? *Whoso stopeth his eare at the Cry of the Poor, he also shall cry himself but shall not be heard*, Prov. 21. 13. Christ made a free proffer of his water to the People, *John.* 7. 37. Openly in the Temple, *v.* 14. although he then knew, that the *Jews* went about to Kill him, *v.* 19. whereupon many of the People did witness unto his Boldness, *v.* 25, 26. and did fully acknowledge him, *as being that Prophet*, v. 40. *and the* CHRIST, ver. 41. And when the Apostles did boldly perform their Lord's-Day Worship *Openly* many souls by that means were brought home to God, three thousand at one time, *Act.* 2. 41. who when their bold Preachers were apprehended, became five thousand, *Act.* 4. 2, 3, 4. nay *persecuting Saul* himself also became a Convert, *Act.* 9. 3. who straitway preached Christ in the same Open manner, *v.* 20, as afterwards he did at *Antioch*, Act. 13. 14. unto the Converting of many *Gentiles*, ver. 48. and whilst he thus preached Openly at *Iconium*, a great Multitude both of the *Jews* and *Greeks* believed, *Act.* 14. 1. and speaking at *Thessalonica* as his manner was, *Act.* 17. 1, 2. *Some of the Jews believed, and of the devout Greeks a great Multitude, and of the cheif Women not a few*, v. 4. *and certain men of Athens*, v. 34. *whilst he disputed Openly*, ver. 17, 19, 22. and at *Corinth* one *Crispus* a cheif Ruler of the *Synagogue*, Act. 18. 8. where *Paul* was encouraged by a Vision not to *Fear*, but to speak *Boldly*, v. 9. Which Believers were sweetly united together by reason of their Sufferings, *Act.* 4. 32. and filled with Joy, *Act.* 13. 52. whilst their Adversaries were grieved, *Act.* 4. 2.

Quod si eos nihil pudeat imprudentiæ damnare Apostolos, quid tamen de Successu dicent, quem ardenti eorum zelo & constantiæ Dominus contulit? Calvin. *ad Pseudonicodemos.*

4. 2. and their threatned Teachers went away Rejoyceing, *Act.* 5. 41. and grew more bold, *Act.* 4. 31. in answer to that earnest Prayer, *v.* 29. of their own company, *v.* 23, 24. who therefore were far from being offended with that refusal of submitting unto their Persecutors Prohibition, *v.* 18, 19.

Thus Spiritually useful to our selves and others might we also perhaps be, were but our spirits and practices accordingly directed; from the want whereof, full little do some consider, how sadly they are Prejudicial.

3. We do hereby expose others unto many sad temtations.

Most men are known to be of a sheepish disposition, being apt to follow their Leaders, whatever way they go before them in; and to be imboldened by their Examples, who have a name for knowing men: in which respect *Paul* wisheth such to wave what they account their Liberty, in a case of this nature, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7, 9, 10. But more especially, 'tis evident that many at this day are strongly tempted and prevailed with, to eat Polluted Bread, and to return with the Dog unto their former vomit, pretending that they must either eat that or starve; who otherwise would be glad of better, but that it is denied them, through fear of suffering. Now when the Spouse desired to know where Christ did feed his Flock, to prevent her turning aside by the flocks of his presumptuous Companions, *Cant.* 1. 7. he tells her, If she knew not, (which intimateth his wondring at her Ignorance) she should go her way by the foot-steps of his Flock, *v.* 8. thereby signifying, that the Assemblies of his Saints and Churches, are (or should be) so visible unto all, that no honest heart may plead (with any colour) a necessity of falling in with others. But if there be no such common foot-steps to be seen of all, then either Christ's direction there is not sufficient, or else his Flocks *Now* walk not as they were wont to do, and as is their duty, for the preventing of anothers danger. And let us remember, that *Paul* said he was pure from the Blood of all men, *Acts* 20. 26. having taught Publickely, *v.* 20, at *Ephesus*, *v.* 17. where there were many Adversaries, 1 *Cor.* 16. 9. and where himself had sometimes fought with Beast, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32.

Hinc judicare promptum est, nunquid qui Religionem suam tegendo probris Deum afficiunt, vitent eo modo Scandalum: nam audaciores infirmos reddunt ad id, quod merito, alioqui horrerent. Calv. *de vitan. superstit.*

CONSID. VIII.

We do hereby Strengthen the hands of Persecutors, and Open the mouths of Blasphemers; both which are evidently to be seen at this day, and should be seriously laid to heart, as being very great Transgressions.

1. We

1. We ſhall ſtrengthen the hands of Perſecutors. It is too palpably to be obſerved, how prone men are to cenſure poor non-complying Sufferers, as being ſelf-willed or indiſcreet; whilſt their Perſecutors are complemented with and juſtified, or at leaſtwiſe very favourably condemned: which as it is offenſive to the Lord, *Prov.* 17. 15, ſo muſt it needs animate the common Adverſary. *Quinetiam ludibrio habent eos, quos vident hac ſollicitudine affici, & zeli inconſiderati eos damnant.* Calv. *ad Pſeudonicodem.*

However, a bare complying with this Prohibition, doth make them apt to conclude, that their interpoſure in ſuch a way is warrantable; or elſe (ſay they) it would not be thus actively ſubmitted unto (in a caſe of this nature) by the generality of men pretending to the fear of God. We are bid to be ſubject to the higher Powers, ordained of God, *Rom.* 13. 1. becauſe ſuch Rulers are not a Terrour to Good works but to the Evil, *v.* 3. which Reaſon doth plainly ſhew, how far our Active ſubjection is a Duty: but whilſt it is ſo generally yeelded, ſuch Rulers who act in a quite contrary way, are made to think, that they are theſe Powers, ordained of God for ſuch a purpoſe; and that theſe works are evil, which they prohibite, becauſe they are therein ſubjected unto, by thoſe who are ſuppoſed able to underſtand the true ſenſe and meaning of that Scripture: Nor can the like inference be truly made, from my ſubjecting unto their Bonds or Baniſhments; ſince I am herein meerly paſſive, and have thoſe Apoſtles for my Preſidents, *Acts* 5. 18, 26. & 13. 50, 51, who yet whilſt they were at liberty, would not obey their Prohibition, *Acts* 5. 29. And though *Moſes* might lawfully be hidden by his Parents, *Heb.* 11. 23. in a Civil caſe, of utmoſt danger, and which did no way neceſſitate their ſurceaſe of Religious Worſhip; yet can it not be argued thence, unto my hiding of Publick Worſhip, which was not then a Duty as now it is: nor doth mine *active* ſubjection give ſo much countenance to an unjuſt Law, in a Civil caſe, as in a matter of Religion; both becauſe the unrighteouſneſs of ſuch a Law is more obvious to All by the Light of Nature (than in a Religious Caſe) which therefore is not ſo eaſily obſcured by my complyance with it; and alſo becauſe it hath been the common Principle and Practice of men truly conſcientious, rather to hazard their All, than to purchaſe their Perſonal ſecurity with the neglect of their Religious duty; and therefore they who ſtill judge our preſent Compliers to be *Conſcientious*, muſt alſo needs be apt to juſtifie that Law, which they do thus readily ſubmit unto. Now let it be ſeriouſly conſidered, how ſad a thing it is, to ſlay (by unchriſtian cenſures) the ſouls that ſhould not die, and to ſave (by unwarrantable Compliances) the *Confirmant ſævitiam potentum ſuâ diſſimulatione.* P. Melan.

the ſouls that ſhould not live, *Ezek.* 13. 19. to make the heart of the Righteous ſad, whom God hath not made ſad, and to ſtrengthen the hand of the Wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, *v.* 22. or at leaſtwiſe ſo, as that none doth return from his wickedneſs, *Jer.* 23. 14.

2. We do hereby alſo open the mouths of Blaſphemers exceeding Wide.

Chriſt biddeth his Diſciples, that their Light may ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee their *Good Works*, and Glorifie their Father which is in Heaven, *Matth.* 5. 16. And whilſt the Prohibited Apoſtles (with their company) were all with one accord in *Solomons* porch, the People Magnified them, *Act.* 5. 12, 13. and at this day, not onely the common ſort of People do the like, and men of a far differing perſwaſion from them, who ſuffer for their ſuitable practice; but even the more Ingenuous of their very Perſecutors do commend them, as being faithful to their profeſſed Principles: And as they are made manifeſt unto God, ſo I truſt alſo in their Conſciences who do condemn them (at leaſtwiſe by their contrary practices) as if they were beſides themſelves, as *Paul* ſpeaketh in relation to ſome, who were really of his Opinion, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11, 13. but did encourage others to comply a little, onely leaſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution, *Gal.* 6. 12, 13.

But what do all ſorts of perſons ſay, concerning our Withdrawers? Do not ſome tauntingly tell them, as *Abſolom* did *Huſhai*, *Is this thy kindneſs to thy Friend?* If Chriſt and his Apoſtles be thy Friends, why doſt thou not go with them, who preached Openly, notwithſtanding outward danger and humane Prohibitions? if Publick Worſhip be thy friend, why goeſt thou into a Corner? Do not others ſay, that *theſe are like Ezekiel's hearers, for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their Covetouſneſs?* the ſufferings of others (and in the very ſame caſe) are unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleaſant voice and can play well upon an Inſtrument, but although they like theſe things in others, yet will not they do themſelves accordingly, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. ? Do not others ſay, that *Their Religion is beſt, becauſe their Party have owned it Publickly, although their Meetings were prohibited?* And do not others take encouragement from this withdrawing into a corner, to blaſpheme their Doctrine, and to call their Meetings *Bawdy?* Now though we are not bound to regard a groundleſs ſlander in the way of our Indiſpenſable duty, yet if our Good muſt not be evil ſpoken of, *Rom.* 14. 16. much more ought we to be quickned up unto what hath been proved to be our Duty, by thoſe reproaches which do attend the neglect thereof, and which are too juſtly thereby occaſioned; that ſo the Name of God may not be Blaſphemed among

among the Gentiles through us, as it is written, *Rom.* 2. 24, and upon some such like accounts, *v.* 17,18,19,20,21,22,23.

CONSID. IX.

By our continuing to neglect this Temple-work or Publick Worship, we shall (what in us lieth) block up the way of our own and others mercy, in a manifold respect; as will appear by our observing, what was typically of old retarded, upon the very same account.

1. So soon as *Zerubbabel* did throughly return to his Surceased Temple-work, (with reference to that Publick Worship which was there to be performed) upon that very day, *Hag.* 2. 18,20. the Lord owned him as his Servant, his *Chosen one*, and promised to make him as his Signet, *v.* 23; which Signet or Ring was wont to be worn by Persons of Quality upon their Right-hand, *Jer.* 22. 24; upon which their Arms or Names were wont to be engraven, *Exod.* 28. 21; with which they did use to confirm and seal their most considerable Acts, *Dan.* 6. 17, and Writings, *Esth.* 3. 12; and which they did not use to part with, save in a way of evidencing some more than ordinary Respect, *Gen.* 41. 42, *Esth.* 8. 2, and Love, *Gen.* 38. 18. To signifie unto us, that such Leading men as *Zerubbabel* was, who cordially return in time unto a Surceased-work of this nature, may hopefully expect to be re-acknowledged by the Lord as his Chosen Servants, notwithstanding their former failings; and that he will own them as the Men of his *Right-hand*, or as a People for his *Name* and *Glory*; whom he will make use of in the secondary confirmation of his VVord and VVorks; and whom he will give to others, as a signal of his special Love and Favour.

So also, when *Joshua* the High-Priest betook himself unto this work accordingly, the Lord gave him to understand (within two months after, *Zech.* 1. 7.) that his Iniquity (together with his filthy Garments) was made to pass away, and that he should thenceforth be cloathed with Change of Raiment, *Zech.* 3. 4; which presently was effected, and together therewith (upon the Prophet's instance) a fair Mitre was set upon his head, and the Angel of the Lord (who also is called the Lord himself, *v.* 1, 2.) stood by, *v.* 5; who then protested unto *Joshua*, v. 6, that if he would walk in his wayes, he then should judge his House, *v.* 7; and ordered Crowns to be set upon his head, *Zech.* 6. 11, as a Memorial in the Lord's Temple, *v.* 14, and as an encouragement unto others to come and build there, *v.* 15: To signifie to us in these latter dayes, that when Eminent Professors (who were typified by that High-Priest, *Ezek.* 44. 15.) shall joyn with some Leading men, in the Timely Revival of Temple-work, such then may hopefully expect, that their *Babylonish Pollutions* shall visibly be done away; and that they shall be cloathed with Variety of *Beautifying Garments* in the Mystery; and that they

they ſhall be Known to be the Prieſts of God at the firſt bluſh, as that Mitre upon the Head doth ſeem to intimate; whom Chriſt himſelf (together with others) will then delight to ſtand in the viewing of; and that if they keep cloſe to Goſpel-Rules, they then ſhall not only judge in Temple-matters, but outwardly be advanced alſo, as thoſe Crowns do ſignifie, and as the Types of Chriſt, who hath alway ruled as a King in his Temple, *Luke* 1. 32, and who at laſt ſhall be a Prieſt upon his Throne, *Zech.*6.12,13; who will firſt Temporally rule when his Saints ſhall be advanced, *Dan.* 7. 27, although the Fulneſs of that Temporal Kingdom is reſerved until his Perſonal Appearing, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1.

So alſo, when the Common People were ſtirred up to fall in with the other Two, the Lord did then own them for ſuch who did *fear before him*, Hag.1. 12; and among whom his *Spirit did remain*, according to the tenour of his ancient Covenant, *Hag.* 2. 5; and promiſed to bleſs them in all their Labours and Enjoyments, from that very *Day* wherein they buckled to this Work to purpoſe, *Hag.*2.18,19; which Promiſe is more at large expreſſed, *Zech.* 8. 12, 13: To ſignifie to us in theſe our dayes, that when the more ordinary ſort of Profeſſing *Jews* ſhall unite in ſuch a work with others, who are more Eminent and leading men; they then may expect (and not till then) to be acknowledged as fearing God, and ſuch as through the help of his Spirit have been delivered out of Spiritual *Egypt*; and that Proſperity (both in the Letter and Myſtery) will be the ſpeedy conſequent of ſuch a Timely Return unto their *Duty*.

But in the mean while, all theſe forenamed Mercies were then obſtructed (as now they are) and chiefly becauſe of God's Houſe being diſregarded.

2. So ſoon as this Work was Returned unto, the Lord did immediatly give forth unto them very gracious *Diſcoveries*, concerning what he was then about to do, in order unto the bringing down of their Oppreſſors, *Hag.*2. 20, 21, 22, and the Advancement of Chriſt's Kingdom, whoſe Appearance ſhould make this Second Temple more Glorious than the former, *Hag.* 1. 6,7,8,9, notwithſtanding its preſent ſeeming *Diſpicableneſs*, v.3. To ſignifie unto us, that ſuch a like practice now, is the readieſt way to underſtand God's Secret, and thoſe things that do concern our Peace, which till that time are likely to be hidden from our eyes.

And within two months after, they ſhared in that Mercy of many uſeful and refreſhing Viſions, which hitherto I have not ſpoken of. As that Viſion about the Angel (with his red Horſes) among the Mirtle Trees in the Bottom, together with God's Anſwer to his earneſt prayer, *Zech.* 1. 7, 8,9,10,11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. By which is ſhadowed

out

out, Christ's gracious Presence among his Humble and Afflicted ones, narrowly observing them, and effectually pleading with his Father for their Redemption.

So also, that Vision of the four *Carpenters*, fraying and casting out those four *Gentile* Horns, who had Scattered *Judah*, *Israel* and *Jerusalem*, *Zech.* 1. 18, 19, 20, 21. By which is shadowed out, the utter Extirpation of *Daniel's* four Monarchies, by such whose faculty doth lye in Building.

So also, that Vision of the two *Olive Trees* or *Branches*, emptying their golden Oyl out of themselves, by two golden Pipes, into the seven Lamps of a golden Candlestick, *Zech.* 4. 2, 11, 12, 14. By which is shadowed out, Christ's Faithful Witnesses (partly typified by *Joshuah* and *Zerubbabel*, as they were Leading Men and Eminent Professors) who stand by him when others fail; and who (next under him) are the Maintainers of his golden Light or most precious Truths, which otherwise are like to be extinguished, among Professing Saints and Churches, *Rev.* 1. 20, and 11. 3, 4.

So also, that Vision of the *Flying Roll* or *Curse*, against Thieves and false Swearers, *Zech.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4; and that Vision of the Woman (or Wickedness) carried in an Ephah (by two Women, who had the wings of a Stork, and the Wind in them) into the Land of *Shinar* or *Babylon*, to set her there upon her own Base, *Zech.* 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. By which is shadowed out, the severity of God's proceeding at that time, against spiritual Theives and Covenant-breakers; And that the holiness of *Sion* shall then Speedily distinguish her Sons from the wicked Brats of *Babylon*, who had been formerly (in point of sinful Pollution) promiscuously intermingled.

So also, that Vision of the *four Chariots*, coming out from between two brazen Mountains, and drawn by Horses of divers colours; the first of which (*viz.* the Red ones) were somewhat washy, or onely for a Shew, but did no service, *Zech.* 6. 1, 2; and the last of which (*viz.* the *Bay* ones) were of the finest Mettle, or largest Spirit, and were accordingly commissionated, *v.* 7; from whom the *griesled* did divide, *v.* 6, who at the first drew in the same Chariot with them, *v.* 3, but were not able to hold their pace: By all which is shadowed out, that Variety or Choice of Instruments, which God will use in the accomplishment of his forenamed Work; the first sort whereof will wholly be of little worth; and the last sort will be the best; which yet will be compounded, but they will sever; and so those of the Narrower spirit will go each to their quarter, whilst others of a Larger heart will seek to walk to and fro, more generally and universally, who shall have Orders from the Lord accordingly.

All which Visions were given forth, within two moneths after, that Peoples cordial Return unto their surceased Temple-work; as appeareth by comparing *Zech.* 1. 7, with *Zech.* 7. 1, and as the best Expositors do thence conclude: Perhaps to signifie unto us, that Professors of such a spirit in these latter dayes, may thereby comfortably come to know Christ's *Notice* of them, and *Presence* with them, and *Interceding* for them, and *Goodness* to them, in the subduing of their Adversaries upon his Request; in his *Acknowledgment* of them to have stood by him; in their being *visibly distinguished* (by their Purity) from others of a *Babylonish birth*; and in their being made *further useful*, according to the measure of that Spirit which they have received.

3. The Lord did herewith give forth unto those Typical *Jews*, many gracious and plain Encouragements, both by his Word and Providence. So soon as *Joshua* and *Zerubbabel* were wrought upon, the Remnant of the People did presently concur with them in that Work, *Hag.* 1. 12. Nor is it to be doubted, but that the Common sort of People at *this Day* would do the like, had they but some few Eminent and Leading men to go before them.

And so soon as they had then begun, the Lord told them that *he was with them as when they came out of Egypt*, who therefore would have them *to be strong, and not to fear*, *Hag.* 2. 4, 5. Which, as it is recorded for our encouragement (whose present Dispensation doth seem to have been typified by theirs) so is it also seconded, by God's promising to be for a Sanctuary (or place of hiding) unto those, who (making him their Fear) durst not confederate with threatning *Ashur*, as others did, unto whom their Politick Complyance became *a stone of stumbling*, *Isa.* 8. 12, 13, 14.

And though the *Jews* Adversaries did then a little bestir themselves after their former manner, yet was it only in a way of demanding their Authority, *Ezra* 5. 3, and taking the Builders Names, *v.* 10, and referring it to *Darius* to search into the truth of that Original Order which they pretended unto, *v.* 17; which being found to be a Truth, *Ezra* 6. 2, these wicked Informers were utterly discouraged, *v.* 6, 11, and those Adventurous Builders were as strangely animated, *v.* 7, 8, 9, 10, and prospered through the prophesying of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, and builded and finished it, according to the Commandment of the God of *Israel*, and of *Cyrus* and *Darius* and *Artaxerxes*, v. 14, 15.

And have not we also some comfortable grounds to hope, that such a General Concurrence at this day would be accompanied with the like success? Some few Adventurers among us, are too manifestly continued in their *Bonds*, by reason of their being differted, and (practically at least) condemned by their own Company; whom others concurring boldness

boldneſs and willingneſs to ſuffer with them, would be the likelieſt means to reſcue and ſet at liberty. There ſeemeth now to be ſo much of Conſcience and Humanity in the moſt, as that they would ſcarcely in an eye of reaſon, perſiſt to Impriſon men upon this account, if thoſe were but *Unanimouſly* free to try, who are alike concerned in that Adventure. We are encouraged, in Nothing to be Terrified by our Adverſaries, becauſe this would be unto them an evident token of Perdition, but unto us of Salvation, and that of God, *Phil.* 1. 28. which if it *Then* were of force, then much more *Now*; eſpecially ſince that Event unto the forenamed *Jews*, is left upon record, with reference to our *very Caſe*: And though I am yet hopefully perſwaded, that the Lord will make good that Word in theſe our dayes for his own Name-ſake, although the fore-named Motives ſhould not prevail upon the generality of our Complyers; yet let it be duly weighed, whether we may not be juſtly ſaid (ſo far as in us lieth) to block up the way of that Mercy (together with the reſt beforementioned) ſo long as this Work of God's Houſe is thus neglected, becauſe of *Mans threatning Prohibition.*

Si quicunque illuminati ſunt a Domino Unanimes *eſſent, novâ aliqua ratione quæ nos latet ipſos adjuvaret,* Calv. *de vitand. ſuperſtit.*

CONSID. X.

To conclude; *Deliverance from under this preſent Hour of Temptation, is either nigh at hand, or at ſome diſtance: If at hand, we ſhall then all of us wiſh that we had been courageous, when ſuch ſhall be rewarded (and upon Earth) who have held faſt the Word of Chriſt's Patience,* Rev. 2. 10, 11, 12. *But if Deliverance be at ſome further diſtance, then to comply thus far only, will not long ſecure us; and if ſo, then whether it be not better to ſtand at firſt upon ſo clear a ground, rather than to diſquiet our Conſciences, and grieve the good Spirit of Chriſt, loſe our Reputation, and expoſe our ſelves to further falls, by preſent ſinful and unprofitable Confeſſions.*

Much more might have been added; but this may ſuffice, to hint that Duty to us, which he that hath no mind unto, will not be likely to be overcome by many words.

Cum a rectâ officii lineâ quamam (ut ſibi videbantur) temperata cautione deflecterent paulatim, tandem ceci ac velut ſui obliti, ipſe in exitium præcipites dederunt. Calvin *Ep.* 1. *ad N. S.*

And now it only remains, that I ſhould briefly anſwer to thoſe Objections, which are moſt uſually alledged, in Oppoſition to what hath been Exhorted unto; and which are as followeth.

Object. 1. *Doth not Christ bid his Disciples, when they are Persecuted in one City, to flee into another*, Mat. 10. 23? *And have not the Servants of God accordingly fled from Danger? as* David *from* Saul, 1 *Sam.* 26. 19; Elijah *from* Ahab, 1 *King.* 19. 3. *the good Priests and Levites from* Jeroboam, 2 *Chron.* 11. 13, 14. *the Woman into the Wilderness from the Dragon*, Rev. 12. 14; *Christ from the Jews*, Mat. 12. 14, 15, Luke 4. 28, 29, 30, 31; Paul *from his Adversaries*, Act. 9. 23, 24, 25; *and that whole Church at Jerusalem*, Acts 8. 1.

Answ. These Scriptures make not at all unto the business in hand, because they do only speak to that case of Flying: whereas the present Question is, *Whether we ought not to keep up our Lord's-Day-Worship Openly, where we are, and whilst we continue there at liberty, notwithstanding what outward danger we thereby run the hazard of?*

But yet because some are too apt to flee upon every light occasion, I shall therefore now take some brief notice of what is here alleaged for such a purpose, in relation to every of those forenamed Instances. And so,

1. Christ only biddeth his (unfettled and Itinerant) Disciples, to flee from one City to another, in case they were persecuted in the former, *Mat.* 10. 23; *viz.* in case they were either Not received there, *v.* 14, or were Expelled from thence, as is evident from that Parallel place, *Act.* 13. 50, 51, where Persecution is thus explained, and which [Expulsion] *Piscator* doth observe to be the proper import of that word [διωγμὸς or *Persecution*] upon which account that Church was scattered, *Acts* 8. 1. From whence it therefore cannot be fairly argued, unto a lawful flight, until it come to *Banishment*; and then much less unto the laying aside of Open-Worship (through fear of Suffering) so long as we are permitted to abide in such a City, Town, or Nation.

Besides, that word [*flee*] *Mat.* 10. 23, doth there denote (as *Beza* doth well observe) not *running* for fear of Persecution; but rather, to *make haste*, for fear of losing time; and as Christ's following Reason there rendred doth sufficiently evince; *For verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the Cities of Israel till the Son be come*: whereas according to the sense of this Objection Christ would have said, *For verily I would have you to secure your Lives and Liberties.* And the Apostles after-practice (who knew the mind of Christ) doth put it out of doubt, who would not stir when they were only prohibited with Threats, *Acts* 4. 20, and put in Prison, *Acts* 5. 18, 21, and Beaten, *v.* 40. 42; until they were either Tumultuously Stoned, *Acts* 14. 19, 20, or Banished, *Acts* 13. 50, or Personally Assaulted as to their Lives, and in a way of Uproar, *Acts* 14. 5, 6, and 17. 5, 10, 13, 14, (which we have not yet generally been) who also returned to the same place of danger afterwards,

wards, *Acts* 14. 5, 21; and in the mean time did preach Openly in other places unto which they went, *Act.* 14. 7, and 17. 1, 2, 10, 16, 17. From whose Practice we may learn, both how to interpret Christ's former Speech, and also in what Cases and Manner we may warrantably flee.

2. As to the other Instances. The flight of those Priest's and Levites, was not From outward Danger, but For Religious work, which they were violently hindred from by *Jeroboam*; who rather than they would comply with his Idolatry, did leave their Possessions of their own accord, and went unto *Jerusalem*, which was the Only place appointed then for Publick Worship, and in their own Land still. And that Flight of the Woman into the Wilderness, was rather mystical than literal, *viz.* into such a state or condition, and not into a place of Secrecie, in the sense of this Objection; since many did then suffer Death for preaching Openly, who yet were under that Dispensation of a Wilderness-condition. So that neither of these Examples will justifie our present Flyers out of the Land; and much less such as do withdraw their Publick Worship into a Private Corner, whilst they continue in such a Place.

3. *David* was pursued unto the Death by *Saul*, upon a meer Civil account: and *Elijah's* Flight from *Ahab* was occasioned by a more Personal kind of Persecution; so also was that of *Pauls*, and in a case of Uproar or present Fury, without any colour of Law, which also was their case, *Jer.* 36. 19: and though Christ did avoid some present danger, as occasion was, yet did he never neglect to come up at their Solemn Feasts, or to be present at their Publick Worship. So that nothing can be argued from hence, unto the warranting of Flight, save in the like case and manner: much less unto Withdrawing into Private, so long as men do continue in such a Place or Nation.

Object. 2. *Doth not the Spouse desire to know, where Christ did feed, and made his Flock to rest at Noon, or in a time of Heat and Persecution*, Cant. 1. 7? *And will it not thence follow, that Christ's Flocks may lawfully withdraw into a Secret place at such a time?*

Answ. This Scripture cannot justifie that Practice, which it doth utterly condemn, as hath been formerly made out in part: in order unto the further clearing up whereof, let it be observed, that

1. It is not proved (save by Humane Authority) that we must needs understand, a time of Persecution, by that word, *Noon*: but rather, that the Spouse doth here only desire to know, when she might have an Opportunity of most Free and Full Converse with Christ Alone; which Shepherds and Shepherdesses of old were wont to have, when their respective-

ſpective Flocks were ruminating or laid to reſt, at Noon-tide in thoſe hotter Countries.

2. Though I ſhould grant the other Interpretation of that word, *Noon*; yet doth it not appear ſtill, that this place of Reſt doth ſignifie place of Privacy, but only of Divine Protection and Refreſhing, though ſtill in the ſame Open Field; as it is with Flocks, in the Letter, when reſting under ſome ſhady Trees.

3. This time of *Reſting* here, is plainly diſtinguiſhed from the other time of *Feeding* before-mentioned: ſo that nothing can be fairly argued from hence, unto a more *private feeding* at ſuch a time, (which is the thing in controverſie) though I ſhould alſo grant, that this Reſting was in a Private place.

4. This Scripture is very dark at beſt; which therefore muſt be decided by other Scriptures: and ſo it hath been already proved, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were Openly wont to feed, in a time of Heat or Perſecution. And Mr. *Brightman* doth apply this very place unto thoſe Faithful Ones in *Jeroboam's* time, who were enquiring after that Publick Worſhip in *Jeruſalem*: and this Scripture muſt needs refer to thoſe times, in which (*viz.* among the *Iſraelites*) there might not be any Private Church-worſhip.

5. The Spouſe's meaning here, is evident from Chriſt's following Anſwer; and as from what I have elſewhere obſerved, ſo alſo, from his directing her to feed her kids [*Beſide*] *the Shepherds tents*, Cant. 1. 8: thereby ſignifying, that in this work of *feeding*, ſhe ſhould not come behind the Antichriſtian Shepherds (his preſumptuous Companions) in any thing truly commendable, but ſhould be *equal* with them, or rather (as that word may be rendred) *above* them, though not *among* them: *viz.* every whit as bold and publick and zealous for the Name of *Chriſt*, as others are for the *Man of Sin*. And therefore as that fooliſh woman (by whom Idolaters are typified) is ſaid to be *clamourous*, and to *ſit* (not in ſome Inner room, but) *at the Door of her houſe*, on a ſeat in the High-places of the City, *Prov.* 9. 13, 14: So alſo, Wiſdom (the type of true Worſhippers) is ſaid to *cry* in the chief place of concourſe, in the *Openings of the Gates*, Prov. 1. 20, 21, in the *Top of the High-places*, by the *Way* in the *Places of the Paths*, at the *Gates*, at the *Entry of the City*, at the *Coming in at the Doors*, Prov. 8. 2, 3: to mind us of being *every where* as Publick as we can be, and not inferiour unto others in that reſpect; and according unto which, is Chriſt's Direction to his Diſciples, *Mat.* 10. 27.

Object. 3. *Are we not bid, to be wiſe as Serpents, and to Beware of Men*, Mat. 10. 16, 17?

Anſw. 'Tis true, we are to have a Serpents Eye, but yet in a Doves head

head though; (as Christ there addeth) or in a way of being clear from sinful harm; which therefore (of it self) can argue nothing, unto the decision of what is (in that respect) a matter disputable. So also, we are to *beware* of men, in giving no just occasion to them to persecute us; and in avoiding dangers, so far as lawfully we may, through the exercise of that Wisdome from *above*, which is first *pure*, and then *peaceable*, Jam. 3. 17; or which is, first, careful to keep the Conscience pure from sin, and then (in the second place) to secure the Person from outward suffering. And therefore Christ (together with his former counsel) doth bid his Disciples to preach upon the House tops, and not to fear Men, *Mat.* 10. 27, 28, as they would be confessed by him before his Father, *v.* 32; whose suitable Practice afterwards, doth sufficiently evidence Christ's meaning, which they were certainly well acquainted with.

Illam quam obtenditis Prudentiam, nihil mazor, quæ ut captiosa est fratribus, ita indigna est hominibus Christianis. Calv. *Ep.* 1. *ad* N. S.

All which doth seem to be fully represented by that Picture of a Cherub, (in the second Temple) *Ezek.* 41. 18, 19, having on the one side the face of a Man, (who is most eminent, for the Wisdom of God, abiding in him, *Eccles.* 7. 25, 28, 29, as the Serpent is for earthly wisdom, *Gen.* 3. 1.) and having on the other side the face of a young Lion, (which creature is chiefly noted for its courage, *Isa.* 31. 4.) and both these Faces looking towards a Palm tree, which is the known Emblem of Victory, *Rev.* 7. 9. To signifie unto us, that if we would be Palm-bearing Conquerors in Gospel-Temples, we then must be in the joynt-exercise of Man-like Heavenly Wisdom, (such as hath been before described) and of a stout young Lion's Resolution.

Object. 4. *Doth not the Lord bid his People, to enter into their Chambers, and shut their Doors about them, and Hide themselves as it were for a little moment, until the Indignation be overpast,* Isa. 26. 20?

Answ. Expositors do generally interpret this Scripture, with reference unto the Saints being protected by the Lord, from those common Judgments which are at such a time to fall upon the Wicked; which also is evident from the following words there; and in a way of alluding to that Security of *Israel* in *Egypt* in their Private houses, whilst the destroying Angel passed over. And some of the *Jewish* Writers do (very probably) refer this Prophecy unto that Typical Security of non-complying *Hezekiah*, whilst he who had invaded *Immanuel*'s Land was strangely Overthrown; and in which respect, the Lord's faithful Servants are then called his *Hidden ones*, Psal. 83. 3, as having the promise of his being for a Sanctuary to them, *Isa.* 8. 14, and *Isa.* 37. 33, 35.

Which natural Interpretation is so obvious, as that I should not have

have raiſed an Objection from this place, but that ſome make it the main ground-work of their Plea, for that which it hath not the leaſt genuine reſpect unto.

Obj. 5. *Were not the Diſciples met upon the Firſt-day of the week, with the Doors ſhut upon them, for fear of the Jews? and did not Chriſt then come among them, and ſpeak Peace unto them,* Joh. 20. 19, *as a Juſtification of their Privicy, and as an aſſurance of his gracious Preſence notwithſtanding; which others do experience at this day in their Withdrawings upon the ſame account?*

Anſw. 1. Chriſt's ſaying, *Peace be unto you,* was a uſual form of Salutation, *Luke* 10. 5; which did not relate unto the Juſtifying of their being then in Private; nor was there any need of ſuch a Vindication, as the caſe now was.

2. As to Chriſt's comfortable Preſence; I will not deny, but that it may be vouchſafed unto ſome, as it was unto *Solomon,* when worſhipping at the High-place in *Gibeon,* 1 *King.* 3. 5, which yet did not warrant that Act of his, *v.* 3. But the ordinary Rule by which the many Pretenders at this day unto that Priviledge are to be tryed, is, the Condition upon which the Promiſe of that Preſence is ſuſpended, *Mat.* 18. 20; *viz.* in caſe they be gathered together in Chriſts Name, or according to his Appointment: and what his Appointment is (as to the point in hand) hath formerly been proved.

3. It cannot be argued from hence, that the Firſt-day-worſhip may lawfully be Private for fear of outward danger, ſince it doth no way appear that thoſe Diſciples then were ſo imployed, having reſted the day before, according to what they apprehended to be yet an Abiding duty, *Luke* 23. 56: Nor was the Firſt-day inſtituted for any Solemn Worſhip (as all do confeſs) till after Chriſt's Reſurrection, which theſe Diſciples did not yet believe, and who therefore cannot be ſuppoſed to have ſpent that Day (as yet) in any ſuch Religious way: Nor are they here ſaid to be met together (*with the Doors ſhut upon them*) until the Evening; which therefore muſt needs be a very dark proof of their having been Religiouſly aſſembled the day before: and it doth ſeem that they were then at Supper, if we compare this Scripture with *Mark* 16. 14, which both our Tranſlators and Expoſitors do make to be a Parallel place with this; of which nature that Meeting might alſo be, which was eight dayes after, *Joh.* 20. 26.

From all which Reaſons it doth ſufficiently appear, that theſe Diſciples cannot be proved to have been imployed about any Lord's-day-Worſhip at this time.

But ſo ſoon as they had fully received Chriſt's mind (together with his Spirit) they preached *Openly* ever after, and in the ſame wonted place,

place, *Luke* 24. 53. *Acts* 5. 42: and one would think, that their last practice should rather be confessed to be for our Example.

Object. 6.

These bold Apostles were Extraordinary Persons; and were acted by a more than ordinary Instinct or Influence, (which others in these dayes may also have) and so their Practice is not a Ryle for us to walk by.

Answer.

1. The Extraordinarineſs of their Persons, doth strongly plead for their having been more Private, since Open Preaching did expose them unto utmost Danger from the first, *Act.* 5. 29, 33. and since the Propagating of the Gospel did seem to be so absolutely depending upon the Preservation of those few men's Lives and Liberties. So that an Argument from their Withdrawing, must needs be of less force for us, who cannot truly plead as they might do; but an Argument from those mens Boldness is therefore more full of Power.

2. They did not pretend to any such Extraordinary Inspiration; nor can it be gathered from the Scripture; and in such a case, we must not be wise above what is written.

3. According to this kind of Arguing, we may evade what-ever Instance or Example we have no mind to imitate; which is the worse, because some draw a Demonstration from their sometime-Fear, *John* 20. 19, who will not admit of any Cogency in their After-Boldness, *Acts* 5. 42.

4. For us in these dayes to pretend unto an Extraordinary Spirit, is generally condemned by these Objectors; which therefore must needs be a suspitious sign, when they do thus contradict their own professed Principles, and only in this case of Suffering; and which doth shrewdly argue, a very ordinary spirit indeed, beneath that of a true Disciple, who taketh up his Cross and cometh after Christ, *Mat.* 16. 24, or who is contented with an Ordinary call to suffer, and doth not stand upon his having some Extraordinary Impulse, such as Christ had, *Mat.* 4. 1, which none will now look for, save they who would be his Companions, or walk (hand in hand) Besides him, and not come After him.

Object. 7.

Do we not reade, that Paul preached in the Night, upon the First-day, in an Upper-Chamber, where the Church at Troas *came together, to break Bread,* Acts 20. 7, 8?

Answer.

1. Our late Annotators, upon that place, do sufficiently hint it as their thoughts, that they were then met together in a way of Solemn Assembly, for Publick Prayers and Preaching and Administration of the Lord's Supper.

2. It is there said, that *Paul* preached until midnight, because he was ready to depart upon the morrow, and not because he was afraid of being seen, which his constant practice witnessed against. And if their Privacy from Fear, might be argued from their being in an *Upper Chamber*; then may we also think, that Christ kept the Passover in such a like place from *Fear*, *Mark* 14. 15; or that (before this late Prohibition came forth) those were afraid who have used to keep up their Publick Worship in some such place.

3. It is sufficiently evident, that the Gentile Churches (who had not the benefit of Jewish Synagogues) were forced to meet in some Private houses; and that they made use of the upper room, not because of Secrecy, but only because it was the Largest, as being the Guest-chamber, *Luke* 22. 11, 12.

Object. 8.

Time and Place of Worship are meer Variable Circumstances; which they who stand so much upon, do seem to favour the fond conceit of some, who count such Hours Canonical, *and one Place to be* more holy *than another.*

Answer.

1. These Objections have an Advocate within themselves, on their behalf, whom they do thus unworthily traduce, as if their Plea for Open-worship did arise from any such sorry superstitious fancy: whereas the Other know, that none are greater Adversaries thereunto, than these men are; and that they do only design the Publickness of their Worship, which Others do purposedly seek to Hide, by the variation of their wonted Houres, and by their shifting from place to place.

2. Though Circumstances are but Small things in themselves, yet as the Case may be, the Main of a Duty may consist therein. The Substance of *Daniel's* Private Prayer might have been performed by him without any Danger: and yet he rather chose to hazard his All, than to abate the least Circumstance of Time or Place or Manner (although they were not expresly required by God's Law) when he perceived, what would be the Consequent and Construction of that Abatement. And if the Publickness of our Worship cannot be maintained otherwayes, let us then take heed of undervaluing such weighty Circumstances, unless we be also prepared to call Christ's Publick Worship a *Trivial thing*. And let us withal remember, that God made his being served in such a Circumstantial Place (appointed for his Name)

Ac mihi sana videri jam quosdam video, frivolam intempestivamque hanc meam morositatem irridentes, qui rem non ita magni ponderis perinde urgeam, ac si in eo cardine tota religionis summa verteretur. Calv. *Ep.* 1. *ad* N. S.

Name) to be a demonstration of holy Fear, *Deut.* 14. 23. and that he was to be *Cut off* (as being guilty of blood) who killed a *Goat* or *Lamb* or *Ox*, and did not first bring it unto the door of the Tabernacle, which then was the onely known constant Place for Publick Worship, *Lev.* 17. 3, 4, 5. To signifie unto us, that men truly fearing God, will not dare to make light of those Circumstances, by which his Name is Publickly held forth unto the world; And that a more Private kind of Worship (proceeding from slightness or sluggishness or slavish Fear) is so far from being acceptable unto God, as that it doth most horribly provoke him.

Object. 9.

Those Jews *of old did wholly lay aside their* Temple-Work, *and so were Types of such as wholly neglect their* Gospel-Temple-Worship; *which we do not, but do keep up our* Publick-Worship *still (from house to house as they did,* Act. 2. 46.) *though not so Publickly as some would have us be.*

Answer.

1. The generality of our *Withdrawers* at this day, are so exceeding Private, as that they cannot (with any modesty) pretend unto their being Publick. And they who (being somewhat favoured by their friendly Adversaries) are not so altogether Private as the rest, yet must confess, that Privacy is Designed by them, in their going from House to House; which that Church in *Jerusalem* did not, with reference to their Church-Worship, (for so, *they were All with one accord in* Solomon's *Porch,* Act. 5. 12. or, *in the Temple,* Act. 2. 46.) but onely in relation to their eating Meat, or breaking Bread in a common sense, as it is there explained, *Act.* 2. 46.

2. Those ancient *Jews* (during the time of their Prohibition) are generally conceived to have made use of their common Altar still, and as is evident from those words, that which they offer there, *Hag.* 2. 14. who also might then observe their *Solemn Feasts,* as *Ezra* 3. 3, 4. so that they had some kind of Publick-Church-Worship kept up among them at that time; all which the Lord did count unclean, and doth not take notice of, because they were not so Publick as they might have been, in case the Temple-Work had still gone on: To signifie unto us, that if the publickness of our VVorship be at all obstructed by man's threatning Prohibition, it then ceaseth to be proper Gospel-Temple-work, and maketh our case to be the same with theirs, whatever Difference some may please themselves with the fancy of.

Object. 10.

Appello ipsorum conscientius, nunquid ad hunc finem tendant, ac non potius ut læsionem fugiant cutis suæ. *Calvin.* ad Pseudonicodemos.

We do not thus withdraw from Fear of Suffering, or for the Love of our Ceiled houses, (as those did of old) but meerly because we may be of more spiritual use, by our being at liberty.

Answer.

1. I could say to this Pretence, *What meaneth then the bleating of the Sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear?* Why do *Withdrawers* plead, that some have but Little to lose, (although their *Little* is their *All*, as well as the Abundance of some others.) and who shall manage their Trade in case they go to Prison?

2. Thus some of those antient *Jews* might possibly pretend; but the Heart-searcher tells them, that they solaced themselves in their Ceiled houses. This also hath been pleaded, by all sorts of gross Conformities, in their respective Generations. *Moab* and *Ammon* were the fruit of an Inordinate desire of Children, occasioned by *Lot*'s lingring in *Sodom*, and loss of his wife and sons-in-law by that means, *Gen.* 19. 14, 26, 30, 31: who therefore may seem to typifie a sort of persons in the latter days, who by their singring in Spiritual *Sodom*, have left a spurious off-spring behind them, under a pretence of being Spiritual Fathers, by their Preaching and Complying, which otherwise they did dispair of. I would hope better things concerning our Withdrawers, whom therefore I would not have to speak thus in the others dialect.

Nisi nos impediret vel mortis timor, vel perdendæ Authoritatis suspicio, nisi nos implicitos tenerent fortuna nostra, nisi hominum gratia Libertati nostræ obstaret; an è centum vel etiam ex mille inveniretur unus, qui ita simularet, ut nunc faciunt omnes? Calv. *de vit. Superstit.*

3. Whatever may be mens real Aims, yet we all know, that well-meaning *Uzza* died, for holding that Ark, which had not shaken if the Levites themselves had carried it, as they should have done.

4. By these words [*Ceiled Houses*] we may understand, all manner of *Personal Accommodations*, whether Temporal or Spiritual, so far as they stand in Competition with that Name of God, which then was (and still is) most eminently advanced by Temple-work or Open-worship. Now such as truly fear the Lord, are signally described, by their thinking upon his *Name*, as well as by their often speaking each to other, *Mal.* 3. 16: To signifie unto us, that men truly fearing God, will so respect their own being Edified by their Meeting toge-

ther

ther in a time of danger, as that the Name of God may chiefly be consulted for; without the Securing of which Latter, the Former will not serve their turn Alone. Which Name of God all will confess to be more advanced by meeting Openly than in a more Private way; and then cursed is that Deceiver who hath in his flock a Male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing, *Mal.* 1. 14.

5. *To Obey is better than Sacrifice*, as God told *Saul*, when he sought to cover his Disobedience with such a Plea, 1 *Sam.* 15. 21, 22. Nor have we power to alter what is the Lord's due, though we would give a *Better* for a *Worse*, Levit. 27. 10. And yet withal, we may justly suspect our own judgment, when apt to think that Active duty is of more worth than Suffering; especially since the Lord doth so frequently hint, how peculiarly acceptable (above other Sacrifices) those Burnt-offerings were, by which his Peoples Suffering-duty (next unto Christ's) was shadowed out.

6. If *Paul* a Prisoner may have leave to judge, he thought that his *Bonds* did more further the Gospel, than if he had been at liberty, *Phil.* 1. 12, 13, 14: and the Suffering Witnesses have alway maintained the Candlesticks with Oyl or Light, *Rev.* 11. 4. Which Truth in all Ages hath been experienced and witnessed unto. And had our forfathers been disposed to argue as some do now, they might have had a fairer Plea, but the Cause of Christ would not then have been so much advantaged. The sad want of which help at this day, can only be supplied by the Lord's own Arm, as he hath said it shall be, at such a time as this, *Isa.* 59. 16.

Si tali opinione occupati fuissent Apostoli, quid quaeso nobiscum actum esset? Calv. ad Pseudonicod.

Object. 11.

The More principal End of a Church-meeting, is, to edifie the Church, which is an act of Office; whereas their being useful unto Others, is but an act of Charity: and therefore this Latter must rather be omitted, than that the Former should be prejudiced, by Open meeting in a time of Danger.

Answer.

1. The Apostles were not acquainted with this Distinction, of a *More* and *Less* principal End, so as to improve it in such a way. None will deny, but that they might have prevented (for a time at least) the scattering of that Church, *Act.* 8. 1, could they have thus disputed. Nor have they left any thing upon record, from whence to warrant, what is here asserted. And in a case of that nature, let us suspect that Wit and Reason, which chargeth them with Oversight, whose Rules and Practices we ought to follow.

2. If

2. I do grant, that the Edification of a Church (distinct from others) is the More principal End of such a Meeting, *viz.* with reference unto their Proper and Peculiar Church-acts, but not otherwise. Now since the generality of these Objectors are *Independants*, they will not maintain that Open Preaching (absolutely considered) is a Peculiar Church-act, but of a more common nature; which cannot be denied to be incumbent both upon Churches and Particular Persons, for Publick use in times of Danger; as they are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, and Cities built on Hills that cannot be hid. So that although a Pastor's preaching unto Others, be not so Properly his duty, (*viz.* with respect unto his preaching *As* a Pastor) yet is he Equally bound to preach for the good of Others, as the Churches Light is publickly to be held forth by him to All: and though his preaching unto Others, may be an act of Charity, between Man and Man; yet is it an act of Duty, between the Church and God, to order their Lord's-Day-Meetings so, as that who will may come. And therefore the forementioned Distinction, is no where grounded upon Scripture-Reason, with reference unto a Churches *General Light*, whatever colour it may have, in relation to their Proper Church-acts and Ordinances.

3. Although I should grant, that a Churches Own Edification, is the More principal End of their *General Light* also; yet the Question still is, Whether their Privacy be warranted or condemned, by Christ and his Apostles, whatever may be the Main End of such a Meeting: since it is not left to us, to deduct the Least part of what God requireth, under a pretence of serving him with the Main, *Matth.* 23. 23.

4. VVhatever may be the More principal End of such a Meeting, yet all will grant, the *Most* principal End of all, should be, God's Glory and our own and others Salvation. Now Christ giveth us to understand, that God is not duly glorified by us, unless our Light doth shine *before Men*, Matth. 5. 16. He also telleth us, that whoever doth deny him *before Men*, shall be *denied by Him before his Father*, Matt. 10. 33; unto which is opposed an Open Confession, *v.* 32, and Publick Preaching, *v.* 27, in times of utmost Danger, *v.* 28. And if it be their *Filling Sin*, who do forbid our preaching unto Gentiles, that they might be *saved*, 1 Thess. 2. 16; of how sad a nature must it then needs be, when Preachers shall lay this Prohibition upon themselves, from fear of Suffering? which is not to be the Followers of *Paul*, as he was of Christ, *Acts* 20. 21, 22, 23, 24. *Phil.* 2. 17.

Object.

Object. 12.

The Generality of Churches and Profeſſors are for Withdrawing at this day; and can we think that All ſhould be thus Ignorant or Neglective of what is their Duty?

Nunquid (inquiunt) fideles omnes per *Galliam, Flandriam, Angliam & Italiam* diſperſos, pro rejectis habeam? *Calv. de vit. Superſtit.*

Anſwer.

Paul had but few Companions; and among all thoſe Typical *Aſian* Churches, there were but two that were free to ſuffer, *viz.* the *Smyrnians* and *Philadelphians*; that ſo we might learn in them, not to think of Men, above what is written. *Judah* was bid not to offend, though *Iſrael* (who were ten to one) had ſet a bad Example, *Hoſ.* 4. 15; and thoſe Levites were not excuſed with whom All *Iſrael* went aſtray, *Ezek.* 44. 10. *In many things we offend all*, Jam. 3. 2; and therefore we may not idolize that Troop or Number of typical Stars, for which (among other things) God's antient People were laid aſide, *Iſa.* 65. 11, 12. It will become us in ſuch a caſe, to adore his Sovereignty, who may do with his own what he pleaſeth; and humbly to improve the failings of others unto our Caution, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12, *Rom.* 11. 20, eſpecially ſince Chriſt telleth us, that in this Day of his, many that are Firſt ſhall be Laſt, and the laſt firſt, *Matth.* 19. 30.

Mihi ergo valde dolet, quod ita mordicus in me inſiliunt, ut putens nihil aliud ſibi agendum, quam ut ſint Uno homine Superiores. Calv. *ad Pſeudonicod.*

Object. 13.

But having Once born my Teſtimony, in a way of Suffering, will not that ſuffice to Excuſe me from running any Future hazard?

Anſwer.

Indeed it ſhould more than ſuffice the World, that they have Once born their Teſtimony againſt the Truths of Chriſt, by perſecuting them; but yet we ſee, they are not ſatisfied with what they *have done* in way of Oppoſition; and ſhall we then give out, becauſe of a former owning? Thoſe bold Apoſtles, were Threatned, *Acts* 4. 21, and then Impriſoned, *Acts* 5. 18, and at the laſt were Beaten, *v.* 40; yet were they at the ſame Work *again*, and in the very *ſame place*, v. 42. *John-Mark* doth ſeem to have been of theſe Objectors mind, *Acts* 13. 13; with whom *Paul* therefore would never hold Communion after, *Act.* 15. 37, 38. He that will come after Chriſt, (or be his Diſciple) muſt take up his Croſs *daily*, and not once for all, *Luke* 11. 23. The

Quando igitur homo tantum roboris habeat, ut poſſit confeſſionis periculum ſibi accerſere, non poteſt regulis deſcribi; ſed Eventus ipſe oſtendet, an Spiritus Sanctus confirmaverit animum. Conſil. P. Melanct. *Phi-*

Philadelphian Angel had kept the Word of Christ's Patience formerly, *Rev.* 3. 10. and yet he is bid to hold that fast, that no man take his Crown, *v.* 11; since he only that shall *endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*, Mat. 24. 13. It is most honourable to dye, in standing to Christ's Colours, than to Run away, although with some Signal of our having been in Battel. If it be a Duty to *suffer* in such a Cause, why do we not *persevere?* and if it be not a Duty, why did we then *begin?*

Object. 14.

But suppose that we have no Teaching Officers among us; or that our Officers are violently taken from us: will not that sufficiently excuse our not appearing in a Publick way?

Answer.

1. This cannot be justly pleaded by them, whose Officers are with them, or whilst they are at Liberty; which generally is the case at this day.

2. Nor will this advantage those, who carelesly have neglected to furnish themselves with such Officers heretofore.

3. Nor will it profit them, who are for the exercise of a Gift, in way of ordanary Prophesying: and who are competently furnished with such a Gift accordingly; especially in case this hath been Practiced by them (in their Teacher's absence) before the *Prohibition* came forth.

4. Nor will this Plea suffice, if such might comfortably and conveniently Joyn with others in their Open Worship, although themselves be not abilitated for the Honourable management of such a work.

Object. 15.

But if we be not Members of any Particular Church, are we not wholly disobliged from such a Duty?

Answer.

Proper Church-Worship (as such) cannot be duly converst about, save only by those who are the proper Members of such a Church: And Publick Worship is principally incumbent upon such, who do professs themselves to be Christ's visible Churches. But yet the Lord's-day-worship is publickly to be maintained by All Professors; especially since they do generally believe, that this *Day* is instituted for such a nend: and since Professors (as well as Churches) are clearly typified by that word, *Temple:* and since we read, that such did frequent the Meetings of those bold Apostles, who yet were no Actual Members of their Particular

Vult Christus honestam frequentiam esse Publicorum congressuum, & hanc vult a Singulis adjuvari; vult enim Ministerium Evangelicum Conspici & Audiri, quod non fit in Dissipatione. Melanct. *ubi supra.*

ticular Church, *Act.* 5. 12, 13, 14. and since that command of *shining as Lights before Men*, was given to the Apostles, not meerly as they were a Church, but also as they were Disciples: and since it must needs be the Duty of others to be Present, if (partly) for their sakes, the Churches ought to meet in Publick, as hath been already proved.

Object. 16.

But if I have not Light into this Duty, will not that Excuse me, since what is not of Faith is Sin?

Answer.

1. 'Tis good to deal Ingenuously; since otherwise, if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not, *Doth not he that pondereth the Heavens consider it? and He that keepeth thy Soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works*, Prov. 24. 12. And if some at this day did really want Light into this Duty, how then could they Rejoyce in others Boldness, and wish that such a like Spirit were more generally given forth? as they seem to do.

2. Though we are first bound to be informed before we act, because the Lord first requireth the Head, or Seat of Understanding, *Lev.* 1, 8. yet where the Means of Knowledge are afforded, their Ignorance doth neither Excuse from Duty, nor from that Penalty which is annexed to its Neglect, *Luke* 12. 48. Especially when men are *willingly ignorant*, 2 Pet. 3. 5; which may be easily discerned, by their not Coming to the Light, *John* 3. 20, or by their not receiving the Truth in Love, 2 *Thess.* 2. 10.

And as a Quickner of us upunto the speedy use of all holy Enlightning Means, let us remember that Case of those Foolish Virgins, who being bid to go out and meet the Bridegroom, (whose Coming is in the Clouds of Darkness and outward Tribulation, *Matth.* 24. 29, 30.) Pretended their want of Oyl, or Light, *Matth.* 25. 6, 8; which though they did seem to have procured afterwards, yet would it not avail them when once the Door was shut, *v.* 10, 11, 12.

Object. 17. *The truth is, we want a Spirit of Courage, and what would you have us do in such a case?*

Answ. 'Tis far better to confess it, than to cover it, as many do at this day, by which the way of their own mercy is blocked up.

But yet all will confess, that *Peter* sinned when he denied his Master, although 'tis manifest, that he did then only want the Exercise of a courageous Spirit. Nor would it *stulasse*. Calv. *de vit. Super.*

Cum agnoscant se timore hominum in arctè vivendi fluctuare, peccatum suum confiteantur, absit ut eos ab omni defensione, & spe veniæ illis opportunitatem ex hoc iste emergendi auferam. Non recusent, sed arripiant potius, quo reipsa testatum faciant, se nequaquam per hypocrisin liberationem a Deo petere.

profit that unprofitable servant, when he pleaded, that he was Afraid, and that he had therefore Hid that Talent, which should have been put forth to Publick use, *Mat.* 25, 25, 27, 30. As what time *David* was Afraid, he resolved to Trust in God, *Psal.* 56. 3. and so should we, begging that Grace which is sufficient for us, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9. and humbly expecting (in the way of our Duty) to share in the benefit of his Intercession, who was Afraid, and yet went on, and was Heard in that he Feared, *Heb.* 5. 7.

Object. 18.

But suppose, that the Teachers onely, or some Few Private Members, be never so fully satisfied, that Open-Worship is a Duty: ought not they yet to be overpowred by the Greater Number, rather than to Divide from them, and break Communion?

Answer.

'Tis very sad it should be otherwise at this day, than in the Primitive times; when the whole Church were *All with One Accord* in Publick view, *Acts* 5. 12; effectually praying for their Teachers, that they might *speak God's Word with all Boldness*, Acts 4. 23, 24, 29, notwithstanding their Adversaries former Threats and Prohibitions, *v.* 18, 21. And O that the Lord would stir up the hearts of All (both Officers and others) to *Ask for that Good Old Way, and walk therein*, Jer. 6. 16.; so might they either preserve their present standing, or else be gathered up into a better.

But if this cannot be; then if it shall appear (from what hath been said before) to be their failing, we may not be partakers of other mens sins, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22; nor do Evil, that Good may come, *Rom.* 3. 8: And if that which hath been Exhorted unto, be of a Truth; then must we only love *Peace* in a second place, *Zech.* 8. 19; since we are only bound to keep the *Unity of the Spirit* (and not the Flesh) in *that Bond of Peace*, Ephes. 4. 3: And if this Complying with Man's Prohibition be an *Unclean thing*, then rather than we may *touch* it (or hold communion with it) we must be content to be (in a passive way) *separate*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. And who knoweth, but that the whole Flock may follow, when some few lovely He-Goats shall lead the way? however it is their duty to go before, *Jer.* 50. 8, and such the Lord counts *comely* in their going, *Prov.* 30. 29, 30, 31. Let every of us therefore resolve with *Joshua*, that we and our House (or whom we can influence) will thus serve the Lord, *Josh.* 24. 15: Let the Members of one Church go to another, saying, *Let us go speedily, I will go also*, Zech. 8. 21: and I would fain hope that every one of *David's* Spirit will gladly comply with such a Motion, *Psal.* 122. 1.

These

These are the Principal of those Objections that I have ever met with, against what hath been pleaded for: all which I must submit (together with their Answers) unto their Censure, who are Judicious, Candid, and Impartial.

And now, if there be any remaining weight in those Arguments before-mentioned, let us all be stirred up to act accordingly: As we would be the Followers of God's most Faithful Servants in former Ages: As we would yeeld obedience to Christ's express Command: As we would answer to that Main End for which we are appointed: As we would not incur what hath befallen Others for our Warning: As we would not betray Christ's Right and Ours, unto the fortifying of an unrighteous Law: As we would not evidence our being acted by a spirit of slavish Fear: As we would not be sadly prejudicial to others: As we would not strengthen the hands of Persecutors, and open the mouths of Blasphemers: As we would not block up the way of our own and others Mercy: And as we would not expose our selves unto future Sorrow, and more gross Temptations of a sinful nature.

Arise therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with thee, 1 *Chron.* 22. 16.

To Day if ye will hear his Voice, Heb. 3. 7.

Consider what I say, and *the Lord give thee understanding in all things,* 2 Tim. 2. 7.

THE END.